

## HALF-AND-HALF TAX SYSTEM DEFENDED

Former Commissioner West Debates With Congressman Prouty on Public Library.

Compelling data showing the wisdom and justice of the half-and-half plan, and the fallacy of any legislation threatening its destruction, was furnished by former Commissioner H. L. West in opposition to the striking arguments advanced by Congressman S. P. Prouty of Iowa, in the Public Library last night, in the debate on "Should Congress Abolish the Half-and-Half Tax?" given under the auspices of the Study Club in Economics, who made free use of the privilege to ask questions at the close of the debate.

The truth of Congressman Prouty's claim that the District should have self-government was admitted by Mr. West, but he pointed out that the Government could not, with fairness to itself, relinquish control of the Administration of the Capital, which is, under the Constitution, the seat of Government. He said during the city self-government, Congress would not appropriate the funds of a local government to disburse, and if the city were compelled to meet its own expenses, one of two things would happen: "Either the burden of taxation would be doubled to keep the city on its present plane," said Mr. West, "or the program of development would have to be cut in half. The first would be unfair to the District, and the second would be unfair to the people of the United States, who want their Capital to progress and not to retrograde."

Prouty's Argument.  
Mr. Prouty advanced three reasons why Washington is able to care for itself without Government aid.  
"One," he said, "is that it has the largest amount of property per capita of any city of its size; another, it has the least burden of indebtedness of any city of its size; and the third, it doesn't have to support anything but itself." He argued that all the disbursements between Congress and residents of the District is distributed to the people of the District. He declared that the people of the District are better qualified for self-government than any community in the United States.

Assistant Tax Assessor E. W. Oyster, in the discussion, said: "Mr. West says the property of the District is taxed too high, and Congressman Prouty says it is not taxed enough. I don't agree with either. When the present board of assessors gets through with taxing the property of the District it will be just right. Congressman Prouty proposes, by his amendment to the George bill, to check the backs of all of Washington's taxpayers in order to reach what he calls the malefactors of great wealth, who are systematically dodging their taxes. His amendment will increase the tax on the wage-earners 50 per cent."

Justice of Taxation.  
The assertion of Congressman Prouty that it was unjust to the people of the District to ask Federal help in supporting the Capital, was disputed by Mr. West. He said that while the per capita tax for every man, woman, and child of the District is \$1.50, the amount contributed by the nation averaged only 6 cents for each citizen. Mr. Prouty said that he did not want to see the residents of Washington have any advantage over those of other cities.

"If I lived here, I'd yell, too," said the Iowa Congressman, "but I live in the United States, and while I'm in Congress I'm not going to let you people here in the District have an unfair advantage. One of the greatest crimes a citizen can commit is to use the power of taxation to take from one to give to another, unless as an act of charity."

"It is had enough to have taxation without representation," asserted Mr. West, "but it's going to be a great deal worse to suffer confiscation."

The District champion created a general laugh when he said that "everybody who wants to go to the White House to see the President, and some of the people of the District to assume the burden of caring for the National Capital, and then, all he could say is 'let them be'."

Mr. West concluded the debate by saying that if the 100,000 people of the United States would the 20,000 residents of the District to assume the burden of caring for the National Capital, and then, all he could say is 'let them be'."

Railroads Need Not Redeem Lost Tickets.  
"Passenger" tickets, mislaid, lost, destroyed, or stolen, need not be redeemed by railroads, according to a decision by the Interstate Commerce Commission today. The Commission also upheld the rule of carriers who will not redeem unused tickets unless the request for redemption is accompanied by the unused transportation.

## Billion-Dollar Increase In Exports Reported

A billion-dollar increase in exports during the last decade was shown in statistics made public by the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce today, the increase being greater than that for the thirty years previous.

The largest single item last year was raw cotton, valued at \$575,000,000; iron and steel worth \$231,000,000, and breadstuffs worth \$205,000,000 were also exported during the year.

## 43 Vessels Wrecked in North African Hurricane

MELILLA, Morocco, March 12.—Forty-three vessels today are wrecked on the north African coast by a hurricane. Five of the ships were steamers. Many lives may have been lost. Thousands of dollars of property was destroyed.

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